

ANNE BIRKENMAIER, ESHTER WHITFIELD (EDS.): *Havana Beyond the Ruins: Cultural Mappings after 1989*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

Scholars of Cuba are constantly trying, and failing, to escape Havana. Events and sources based in the capital too often substitute for knowledge of the island as a whole. From this point of view, Anne Birkenmaier and Esther Whitfield's edited collection *Havana Beyond the Ruins* might be accused of adding another Havana-centric entry to an already Havana-centric scholarly corpus. And yet, rather than simply mining the city, its people, and its archives for the stories they tell about the nation, the contributors to this impressive volume endeavor to re-particularize the capital, taking the physical, lived, and imagined spaces of urban life as their subject of inquiry, as *texts* to be read. In the process, the city reveals itself as a complex palimpsest, a site onto which contending narratives, gazes, temporalities, political imaginaries, emotions, pasts and presents are overlaid and continuously rewritten—all the more so in the tumultuous, ideologically unmoored post-Soviet era.

It is because Birkenmaier and Whitfield are keenly aware of Havana's outsized symbolic significance vis-à-vis greater Cuba that they seek to take us "beyond the ruins" generally defining the city's global public image. For tourists, Havana's urban decay asks to be photographed and fetishized; it provides grist for the first-world nostalgic mill obsessed with places supposedly "frozen in time," even if that "time" is, paradoxically in this case, colonial, mid-century-modern, and revolutionary all at once. For *habaneros*, on the other hand, crumbling façades conceal interior spaces where personal agonies are lived and daily lives, for better or worse, are forged.

Birkenmaier and Whitfield deserve praise for the volume's interdisciplinary nature. Bringing together architects, urban planners, anthropologists, and literary scholars—from the island and off—the volume's thirteen essays move deftly between the city as built environment, contested symbol, or social ecosystem, on the one hand, and inspiration for private meditation and imagined pasts and futures, on the other. The best contributions, in fact, travel freely among these analytical registers. Thus, Emma Álvarez Tabío frames her own standout reflections on Havana's architectural history and the lost "Citizen Decade" of the 1980s within a discussion of urban ruins in the literary works of Julián del Casal, José Lezama Lima, and Pedro Juan Gutiérrez (writers from the late-nineteenth, mid-twentieth, and late-twentieth centuries, respectively). Likewise, the late Mario Coyula, in an essay ostensibly about the broader sweep of urban development across the revolutionary period, delivers a passionate, angry memoir of an architect who spent a career battling to improve the city he loved, only to see it

descend into a “non-place,” “damaged” (50) almost beyond repair. Meanwhile, Havana’s most well known, if controversial “ruinologist,” the writer Antonio José Ponte, invokes the Greek parable of Simonides—the fabled creator of the art of memory—to compare the physical destruction of Havana to a post-totalitarian memory palace that needs rebuilding.

Not all contributors are prepared to echo such pessimism. Criticizing Ponte as overly gloomy, Patricio de Real and Joseph Scarpaci focus not on passive subjects who escape their circumstances through dreams, but on those citizens who, by self-engineering mezzanines (*barbacoas*) on the interior of existing apartments, literally transform the fragile built environment into their own private places of refuge. Likewise, Sujatha Fernandes recalls a hopeful juncture of the late 1990s when mostly black hip-hop artists used the city as a backdrop on which to forge alternative publics, discourses, and arenas for addressing the social, racial, and economic dislocations of the Special Period. By design, the editors allow tensions between discussions of urban stasis and citizen agency to stand unresolved within the volume’s pages. Likewise, differences between the city as marketed and as lived, topographies physical and ideological, all receive attention, part of a wider excavation of the diverse “cultural mappings” converging on Cuba’s capital today.

As a whole, the book exudes a sense of melancholy, a feeling no doubt familiar to many of Havana’s residents and visitors. From the vantage point of 2014, however—three years after the volume’s initial publication—these essays may not reflect the simultaneous liveliness or outward-directed energy that is present in Cuba’s capital today. *Havana Beyond the Ruins* was conceived and published on the threshold of Raul Castro’s entry into power. While his reform agenda has been dismissed as superficial and cosmetic, it is true that openings for private, service-oriented small-business (funded by foreign dollars), the profusion of private taxi services, and greater possibilities for foreign travel have created new opportunities for mobility and social engagement, albeit at the risk of exacerbating existing economic disparities. One wonders, then, whether the dystopian works of writers like Ponte and Pedro Juan Gutiérrez (author of the *Dirty Havana Trilogy*)—analyzed in this volume by Ceclia Lawless—fully account for a set of newer urban dynamics that are also worthy of consideration. With \$5 billion dollars now entering the country annually in cash and in-kind remittances (a five-fold jump from five years ago), Havana may not be as static in the present as it was in the recent past. Future editions of the book might benefit from considering the consequences of these intensified transnational flows and private economic activities on the social, cultural, and economic life of the city, not to mention its built environment.

Ultimately, if the volume's tone feels ever so slightly out of time, this only confirms that Havana has never been "stuck in time," as an abundance of photography and coffee-table books would have us believe. *Havana Beyond the Ruins* provides an excellent, multivalent, elegiac, often eloquent portrait of where Cuba's capital has been and where it may be going. Avoiding definitive answers, prompting reflection more than impulse judgment, Birkenmaier and Whitfield's collection testifies to a city sitting at the threshold of something new, whose contours are only just starting to be defined.

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**DANIEL GOLDSTEIN: *Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City*. Durham and London: Duke University Press 2012.**

This book is a study of security and community justice in a recently-settled *barrio* of Cochabamba, in Bolivia. It is engaging, well-written, honest, and illuminating; and it is extremely rich in the debates that it tackles. A short review cannot do full justice to its wealth of ideas and arguments, so instead I present reflections on some key elements.

On the surface, *Outlawed* is the result of a well-designed research project where a team of ethnographers have asked people in a marginal *barrio* of Cochabamba what they think about concepts of security, community justice and human rights. The book puts these perspectives into dialogue with a critical discussion of those discourses as they operate transnationally. This leads to an excellent exploration of how debates about security have developed over the last few decades, combined with an attempt to marry the different levels of security discourse into a coherent analysis – no small feat. We are told how 'security' has achieved prominence as a political discourse, for international development agencies in the post-9/11 environment, but also within a region-specific history of how Latin American dictatorships described and tackled 'public order'. The focus though is on understandings of insecurity in poor urban neighbourhoods.

Goldstein also discusses the attempts to add an analysis of economic insecurity to the very narrow association of insecurity with vulnerability to crime. I agree with him that it is extremely important to outline some of the ways that poverty creates all kinds of vulnerability and uncertainty. That said, although he does appear to have found some evidence of these broader interpretations of 'security' among informants, they are rather buried beneath the dominant discourse of crime-related insecurity. Although Goldstein slightly pulls back from arguing